

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (cancelled)
2. (currently amended) The method of claim [[1]] 11 wherein selecting segments for synthesizing the target utterance includes identifying a path through the graph that matches the pronunciation of the target utterance and selecting the sequence of segments that is identified by the determined path.
3. (original) The method of claim 2 wherein determining the path includes determining a best scoring path through the graph.
4. (original) The method of claim 3 wherein determining the best scoring path involves using a dynamic programming algorithm.
5. (original) The method of claim 2 further comprising concatenating the selected sequence of segments to form a waveform representation of the target utterance.
6. (currently amended) The method of claim [[1]] 11 wherein selecting the segments for synthesizing the target utterance includes determining a plurality of paths through the graph that each matches the representation of the pronunciation of the target utterance.
7. (original) The method of claim 6 wherein selecting the segments further includes forming a plurality of sequences of segments, each associated with a different one of the plurality of paths.

8. (original) The method of claim 7 wherein selecting the segments further includes selecting one of the sequences of segments based on characteristics of those sequences of segments not determined by the corresponding sequences of unit labels associated with those sequences.

9. (currently amended) The method of claim [[1]] 11 further comprising forming a representation of a plurality of pronunciations of the target utterance, and wherein searching the graph includes matching any of the pronunciations of the target utterance to paths through the graph.

10. (currently amended) The method of claim [[1]] 11 further comprising forming a representation of the pronunciation of the target utterance in terms of alternating unit labels and transitions labels.

11. (currently amended) A method for selecting segments from a corpus of source utterances for synthesizing a target utterance, comprising:

searching a precomputed graph in which each path through the graph identifies a sequence of segments of the corpus of source utterances and a corresponding sequence of unit labels that characterizes a pronunciation of a concatenation of that sequence of segments, each path a numerical score that characterizes a quality of the sequence of segments;

wherein searching the precomputed graph includes matching a pronunciation of the target utterance to paths through the graph, and selecting segments for synthesizing the target utterance based on numerical scores of matching paths through the graph;

the precomputed graph includes a first part that encodes a sequence of segments and a corresponding sequence of unit labels for each of the source utterances, and a second part computed in advance of run-time when the target utterance is known that includes paths for coupling segments of the source utterances and encodes allowable transitions between segments of different source utterances and encodes a transition score for each of those transitions; and

matching the pronunciation of the target utterance to paths through the graph includes considering paths in which each transition between segments of different source utterances identified by that path corresponds to a different subpath of that path that passes through the second part of the graph.

12. (currently amended) The method of claim [[10]] 11, wherein selecting the segments for synthesis includes evaluating a score for each of the considered paths that is based on the transition scores associated with the subpaths through the second part of the graph.

13. (currently amended) The method of claim [[10]] 11 wherein a size of the second part of the graph is substantially independent of a size of the source corpus, and a complexity of matching the pronunciation through the graph grows less than linearly with the size of the corpus.

14.-16. (cancelled)

17. (currently amended) The method of claim [[1]] 11 wherein the graph is associated with a finite-state transducer which accepts input symbols that include unit labels and transition labels, and that produces identifiers of segments of the source utterances, and wherein searching the graph is equivalent to composing a finite-state transducer representation of a pronunciation of the target utterance with the finite-state transducer with which the graph is associated.

18. (currently amended) ~~Software stored on a~~ A computer-readable medium comprising instructions for causing a computer to perform functions comprising selecting segments from a corpus of source utterances for synthesizing a target utterance, wherein selecting the segments comprises:

searching a precomputed graph in which each path through the graph identifies a sequence of segments of the corpus of source utterances and a corresponding sequence of unit and transition labels that characterizes a pronunciation of a concatenation of that sequence of

segments, each path being associated with a numerical score that characterizes a quality of the sequence of segments;

wherein searching the precomputed graph includes matching a pronunciation of the target utterance represented by unit labels and transition labels to paths through the graph, and selecting segments for synthesizing the target utterance based on the numerical scores of matching paths through the graph;

the precomputed graph includes a first part that encodes a sequence of segments and a corresponding sequence of unit labels for each of the source utterances, and a second part computed in advance of run-time when the target utterance is known that includes paths for coupling segments of the source utterances and encodes allowable transitions between segments of different source utterances and encodes a transition score for each of those transitions; and matching the pronunciation of the target utterance to paths through the graph includes considering paths in which each transition between segments of different source utterances identified by that path corresponds to a different subpath of that path that passes through the second part of the graph.